

## **CTR-CAQ PROGRAM**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **General**

##### **Who is eligible to participate in the CTR-CAQ program?**

The program is for graduate students who are in their second or third year of graduate school at Baylor College of Medicine. Graduate students apply in the spring of the preceding academic year. Applications usually open around April 15<sup>th</sup> and the deadline is around June 1<sup>st</sup>.

##### **How many students are accepted each year?**

Enrollment is capped at 30 students to allow for small group work.

##### **Do students need to have previous clinical experience to apply?**

No, providing this experience is a goal of the CTR-CAQ program.

##### **How long is the program and will it affect progress on my graduate studies and research?**

The CTR-CAQ program takes two years and all activities are organized in parallel with the primary graduate program requirements. Our experience with clinical research training in the legacy Translational Biology and Molecular Medicine Program has shown that it does not slow progress on your thesis research. Early data from graduates of our program indicate the same.

##### **How many credits are required to complete the program?**

You must complete 12 credits, a subset of these can be co-credits with elective requirements for your primary PhD program, with approval of your program director.

##### **What is the funding for this program? Will my thesis advisor or I have to pay tuition or fees to participate?**

There is no extra tuition or fee for participating in this program. Some students can be supported each year by the program's institutional T32 training grant.

##### **Is there a defined career objective for students following completion of this effort?**

Students will receive a Certificate of Added Qualification. We know that evidence of clinical translational research training benefits students when they apply for postdoctoral positions in academia or other positions outside of academia where this experience is valued. We expect this training will appeal to students who are interested in conducting translational research after graduation.

#### **Application**

##### **How are participants selected?**

Students complete and submit an application by the deadline (traditionally on or around June 1<sup>st</sup>) in the preceding academic year. The CTR-CAQ Application Committee reviews submitted applications and selects the strongest applicants. There will not be an interview as a part of the selection.

##### **If we apply and are not admitted in the first year, can we reapply the following year if we are currently a first or second year student?**

Yes

**If we do not apply in our first year, because we have not picked a lab, can we apply in our second year?**

Yes, second year students can apply to this program, for entry in their third year. We know not every student will be ready to begin this program at the beginning of their second year.

**May students who are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year apply?**

At this time, no; however if someone wants to petition us for an exception we are open to discussing it, depending on space availability.

**Can a student participate if their PhD thesis advisor does translational research?**

Yes, and we believe that these students would benefit greatly from being in this program, because the CTR-CAQ training will complement what they learn from their thesis research.

**If we have co-thesis advisors, do both need to submit a letter of support and biosketch?**

Co-advisors may submit a joint letter and each should submit their biosketch.

## **T32 Funding**

**Is training grant support limited to US citizens?**

Graduate students eligible to apply for T32 funding must be US citizens or permanent residents. The CTR-CAQ T32 is not available to MSTP students.

**Is there a separate application for T32 support?**

Students apply for a slot on the T32 training grant along with their application to the CTR-CAQ program. Students must be US citizens or permanent residents to be eligible to apply. Eligible students already in the CTR-CAQ program can apply in the spring for T32 support in the second year and applications for funding will be reviewed along with those from new students. Students will be notified when applications open.

**Is the decision about the T32 slots made at the same time as the decision about admission to the CTR-CAQ program?**

There is an area in the application where students can indicate their interest in being considered for T32 funding. The applications of interested students will be ranked as a part of the application review.

## **CTR Mentor**

**Does the CTR mentor need to currently be a member of the graduate faculty?**

No, the CTR mentor does not have to be a member of the graduate faculty. In addition to the selected CTR mentor, students will be assigned a faculty advisor who is a member of the graduate school faculty and is affiliated with the CTR-CAQ program.

**Will we receive a list of available CTR mentors?**

There is a list of current and past clinical mentors on the website, but you are not restricted to only those people when selecting a CTR mentor. Your thesis mentor may have suggestions and we encourage you to reach out to the CTR-CAQ co-Directors with questions about mentor selection when you prepare your application.

**Do we contact the person we are interested in having as a Clinical Translational Research (CTR) mentor directly?**

Yes. If they need more information about the program, you can share the information session video with them or they may contact one of the co-Directors (Drs. Van den Veyver or Mysorekar) directly with questions.

**If my PI is a physician scientist who does translational research, can they also serve as my Clinical Translational Research (CTR) mentor?**

Having a different clinical mentor adds to the richness of your training experience, and students must select a separate CTR mentor, but we welcome discussion with students and thesis advisors on how best to individualize their experience and mentorship.

**Can our clinical mentor be from outside Baylor?**

No. the clinical mentor should have a primary full-time appointment at Baylor College of Medicine.

## **Project**

**How do you envision the relationship between capstone and thesis projects since we are already established in labs?**

Your capstone project will be a smaller more clinically oriented research project. It can, but does not have to, be directly related to your thesis project. It should not take excessive time away from your thesis research.

**Can a capstone project be in the area of student's general area of research?** Yes, but it does not have to be. There can be benefit to the student from integrating the capstone project with their thesis research.

**Could the capstone project be an aim of your thesis?**

Yes, if your thesis research is translational and that aim fits within the scope of this program. You will work with your CTR mentor on developing the project during your first year. Your individual guidance committee and your CTR-CAQ faculty advisor will provide additional guidance on the capstone project.

## **Courses**

**Is there more information available about when courses will meet?**

The overall schedule is in the information slides you can review. In your first year in the program, you will complete two required courses (OCTR and PSTRW1). In your second year you will complete PSTRW2. Students can also take OCTR as an elective course before entry into the program.

- Orientation to Clinical Translational Research (OCTR): Term 1, Tuesdays 1-3pm
- Practical Skills in Translational Research Workshops 1 (PSTRW1): Terms 3-5, Select Mondays 2-4pm
- Practical Skills in Translational Research Workshops 2 (PSTRW2): Terms 3-5, Select Thursdays 2-4pm

**Which of the CTR-CAQ courses count as didactic credits towards the 30 didactic hours for candidacy?**

There are three courses that are didactic: OCTR, PSTRW1 and PSTRW2. With approval of the primary graduate program, they can satisfy elective credit hours. Students must communicate with their graduate program about their wishes to have these count as elective credit hours.

**Will there be flexibility on the workshops or are they already prescribed by the program?** The workshops are a course, and the topics listed for PSTRW1 (year 1) are already decided. There will be other workshops in PSTRW2 (year 2). We welcome suggestions and feedback for those workshops. As the program grows, we will consider more and different workshops and welcome faculty participation.